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ABSTRACT

While numerous authors have addressed the subject of the college presidency, the literature does not contain an up-to-date job description of the community college president or the school district superintendent. A job description for the Superintendent/President as Executive Officer for the Board of Trustees would need to include a general statement of administrative relationships; the President/Superintendent will enforce all rules and regulations adopted by the Board, be subject only to the Board, have authority over all other Board employees, and represent the Board in all matters involving law and legal procedure. The description would also state the powers and duties of the office in the following areas: advisement to the Board, execution of Board policies, keeping informed of college programs, interpretation of college/district needs, improvement of instruction and programs, development of community relations, participation in community activities, and nomination of candidates for staff positions. Additionally, he has responsibility for operating costs, facility construction and repair, annual budgets, fiscal operations, information dissemination, regulations governing students, and instructional methods. (DR)

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"Job Description: Community College President"

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"A good man could accept a university presidency in America only if he is ignorant . . . if he knew what a university presidency was like and took the job, he could not be good."[1] Robert M. Hutchins

The farewell address by Charles J. Hitch, President of the University of California, was entitled "Missions Impossible." He spoke of the seven years of his presidency; "All of us - the whole academic community - have been on some impossible missions together, and while we've not exactly turned lead into gold, we did the next best thing: the University not only did not self-destruct, it's healthier and stronger and more cohesive than ever before . . . "[2] One wonders what he would say if he were retiring today.

Harold W. Dodds' interesting and thought-provoking book the Academic President, Educator or Caretaker presented the findings of the study in ten chapters - each relating to the basic question raised by the title as follows:

1. The Setting of the Academic Presidency.
2. The President and Academic Leadership.
3. The President and the Art of Administration.
4. The President and the Realm of the Faculty.
5. Building Faculty Personnel.

[1] Hutchins, Robert M., "Why This 'Bad Man' Heads a University," Los Angeles Times, November 9, 1964, Part II, page 5.

[2] Hitch, Charles J., "Missions Impossible," All University Charter Address, April 3, 1975.

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6. Planning, Factfinding and Budgeting.
7. The President and Supporting Activities.
8. The Domain of the Trustees.
9. The President at Work with His Trustees.
10. The Selection of a New President.

Dodds concludes that the one item more than any other is the importance of the President's function as an educational leader. He also recognizes that many things are occuring in the realm of higher education that are diminishing the President as a force in education.[3]

The book Governance of Higher Education presents a report and recommendations by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and also treats "The Presidency" in an interesting historical manner. "Once largely an agent of the board, the president, particularly after the Civil War, assumed the role of dominant leader. Then, particularly after World War I, faculty organizations began assuming more control . . . . The period of great growth after World War II once again lent itself to forceful administrative leadership; but the period in the second half of the 1960's saw the erosion of presidential influence with the rise of student unrest, the expansion of the authority of state agencies and the more rapid replacement of presidents."

"We believe that the present period calls for substantial changes on campus . . . . This in turn will require greater presidential influence to initiate and guide the changes. It is a period of more than usual conflict on campus that requires

[3]Dodds, Harold W., The Academic President, Educator or Caretaker? McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. San Francisco, 1962, 294 pp.

understanding and action. Additionally, fiscal stringency requires more administrative authority. We believe, consequently, that boards should seek to appoint active rather than passive presidents, presidents who will lead rather than survive. They should also give presidents adequate authority and staff, and their own support in the difficult task of encouraging constructive change - realizing that periods of change are also periods of unusual tension - and of effectively resolving conflict."[4]

Herbert A. Simon in his article "The Job of the College President" enumerates five functions of a college president as follows:

"1. To raise money.

2. To balance the budget.

3. To participate in setting institutional goals, in partnership with trustees, faculty and the community.

4. To work with the faculty to create an environment that encourages learning, for both faculty and students.

5. To recruit and maintain a high quality of faculty."

Simon goes on to say, "A substantial part of this nation's resources are being devoted to higher education. The nation has the right to expect more than talented amateurism and an occasional Mark Hopkins in return. A college president who tries to make education professional should not expect a unanimous vote of thanks from his faculty, or even his students. But if a man's first aim in life were to be comfortable and to be liked, he would choose an easier occupation than college president."[5]

[4]The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Governance of Higher Education. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. San Francisco, 1973, 249 pp.

[5]Simon, Herbert A., "The Job of College President," Educational Record, Winter 1967 pp. 68-78.

Max Lerner in an article entitled "The Merchant Vendors" addresses the subject of the college president's new role. He states, "Their roles have shifted with each era. In the early days they were institution builders. At the start of the century Thorstein Veblen, in his scorching book on "The Higher Learning in America", called them, 'captains of education' to match them with their sidekicks, the 'captains of industry'. In the '60's they became pacifiers; in the early '70's chancellors of the exchequer.

"Now they are moving . . . into a new role - that of merchant vendors. They have to go out on forays for more students to fill an overbuilt, overexpanded plant. They have to venture also for a new curricula that will meet the shifting needs of society."

"The college president will be tempted to respond to his most urgent needs. For the public universities there is the present clamor for 'accountability' which is mostly foolishness. The only true accountability is that of the teacher and the student to each other."[6]

A definition of a campus chief executive by Lawrence M. Gould, former president of Carleton College, probably is as good as any: "The campus chief executive needs the innocence of a lamb, the wisdom of an owl, the cheerfulness of a cricket, the complacency of a camel, the adaptability of a chameleon, the diligence of a beaver, the vision of an eagle, the patience of an ox, the strength of a lion, the nerves of a cow, the stomach of a boa constrictor, the skin of a rhinoceros, the brass of a monkey, and the charm of a deer."[7]

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[6]Lerner, Max, "The Merchant Vendors," Los Angeles Times, July 11, 1975, Part II, page 5.

[7]Gould, Lawrence M., The Wall Street Journal, February 8, 1966, page 10.

Much has been said about the role of the president -- mostly in philosophical terms. Nowhere in the literature was found the classic job description of a president. Most institutional descriptions of the assignment are archaic. Recognizing this interesting phenomenon, and after more than twenty years as a president the author recently determined to rewrite his job description. The description is designed for the chief administrative officer of the community college and is written within the framework of the California Education Code. It is presented as follows:

SUPERINTENDENT-PRESIDENT AS EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Administrative Relationships (General)

The Superintendent-President will be the executive officer to the Board of Trustees and will enforce all rules and regulations adopted by the Board. He shall be subject only to the Board of Trustees and shall have administrative and supervisory authority over all other employees of the Board. In general, he will exercise the supervisory authority through the Vice Presidents and their assistants.

He will serve notices of meetings and issue other required notices. He will represent the Board in all matters involving questions of law or legal procedure and in securing opinions from the County Counsel, County Auditor, or County Superintendent of Schools, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees. He will perform such other secretarial duties as the Board may, from time to time, require of him. Each year the Board will appoint an Acting Superintendent-President to act in full capacity in the absence of the Superintendent-President.

Powers and Duties

In the following areas, the Superintendent-President, serving the Board of Trustees, will:

1. Serve as its chief executive officer;

2. Be its professional advisor in all matters related to the College/District and recommend College/District policies, rules and regulations for its consideration;

3. Implement and execute policies and contracts adopted by it;

4. Keep it informed about the College's programs and higher education in general;

5. Interpret the needs of the College/District;

6. Present his personal recommendations on all problems and issues considered by it;

7. Provide thought and time to the improvement of instruction and educational programs;

8. Lead in the development and operation of an adequate program of community relations;

9. Participate in community activities;

10. Use great care in nominating candidates for appointment to the College/District staff and for special consulting and/or professional services;

11. Recommend for purchase equipment, books, and supplies that are appropriate to the purposes and needs of the College/District;

12. Represent the Board in matters concerning the construction, alteration, and repair of school properties and the purchase and sale of real or personal property;

13. Present an annual budget for its consideration that is designed to serve the needs of the College/District;

14. Establish and operate appropriate controls of the financial operations of the College/District to ensure adherence to budget provisions and appropriate use of District funds.

Additionally, the Superintendent-President will be responsible for, but not limited to, duties such as the dissemination of all general orders adopted by the Board of Trustees which relate to the College/District staff; for all rules and regulations governing the admission, transfer, classification, and graduation of students; for the course of instruction, discipline and conduct of the College; and for the methods of instruction and management used by the teachers and Vice Presidents.

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